

Money, Why is It Important to God?

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Date: 07 January 2018

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[0 : 0 0] uh so i wonder what you think about when someone gets up to talk about money i bet some of you or maybe me think actually that's a private affair don't intrude what i do with my money is my affair it's not it's not god's um other people might be like oh i already know the church's agenda here they just want me to give more come on that's it done so i'll just switch off and i'll nod along and just dave will think he's doing a great talk if i smile and nod but inside i'm thinking what am i making for dinner what am i gonna have for lunch because you know i've already thought this through i tithe it's fine um or do we feel condemned or guilty so often i've been to see inspiring preachers uh who talk about money sometimes and they you hear of inspiring people like um i can't remember his name american pastor he he earned loads of money through the purpose-driven life if you rick warren rick warren uh so he earned a lot money through that book and he said he started to tithe at 10 and then him and his wife sat down they figured i actually would give a bit more 20 and now he's giving up to 90 of his wages back to the church and living off that 10 and that's like the other way around what we expect and i think that's great for you i'm just going to hold that arm's length and just you do that that's fine i can't do that um and so we hear these inspiring messages people have laid down everything and gone off and done something else and inside if i'm honest i just feel a bit condemned and guilty and then as a result i'll switch off and just nod along and say yeah great don't disturb me in my way of doing things so i've been given the task of talking about money in church so you might be feeling various of those responses um that's that's the reality isn't it that's where we're at you also might feel joy and happiness at stages of this talk which is lovely as well so we'll go we'll see so why is money so important to god um quick question did jesus say more about money in the bible than he did about heaven and hell yes he did he said a lot more about money jesus said more about handling money possessions than any other single thing in the bible now i've got a friend called pete berry and he got up to do a sermon once a previous church i went to and it was about money and he pulled out a 10 pound note and i wish i was doing i'm not brave enough he pulled out a 10 pound note and he turned on his lighter and he burnt it in front of everyone to start his talk on money we're like whoa what is he doing and again various responses pop out of you they they so some people went treason you can't burn the face of the of the queen that's just awful how could you do that other people were like that money could have been given to the poor to charity which really reflects with mary's pouring the perfume onto jesus and judas saying that money should be given to the poor because that might have been pete offering up to god in his own way and a lot of people got angry some people were just like you just burnt money for entertainment what are you doing like all these various responses come out of people and as a speaker you can't you just don't know what's going to come out of these kind of things we all have different emotional and physical responses to money um uh but i'll always remember that talk because it was shocking it was really shocking he's burnt 10 pound 10 pound note

his his his point though is that often so he has a history of um gambling addiction and he was trapped by a crushing debt in for most of his adult life at this moment he'd lost his his partner he'd lost his wife his car his job everything and through god it completely turned around he's now really he's an amazing salesman he's got a wife he's got a child and he's got a house and he is on fire for god and when he got up to do that talk he just wanted to say i am free of this and burnt it and obviously other people in that congregation weren't at that point they might be on the journey and they might be nowhere near it but they weren't where he was at and so he got a real angry shocking response but petebury is free of money which you know i think in itself is a miracle after seeing what he's been through there's also around money various myths so you might have heard from my accent i'm scottish um it doesn't really come out that strong but have you ever heard of the stingy scotsman well that's a no that's not a myth i'm really stingy i'd like to think it was a myth but it's not the way i've been brought up and there's a famous saying if you want to know what god thinks about money just look at the people that have it or that he's given it to you i'm like actually i'm quite privileged is that me and when we hear stories of the widow's mite in the bible she gave out of her poverty she gave everything and jesus said look at that woman look what she's done compared to just giving a little bit out for her wealth again is that an uncomfortable reaction you get in yourself i do i feel a bit guilty and condemned but if we are feeling condemned or guilty when we talk about money then we're missing the point because all these stories are about the joy and the love that people encountered through jesus zacchaeus met jesus transformed his life and gave back loads of his money the widow's mite out of this generosity and love gave all that she had it's not about the comparison it's not about a measuring stick that we've got to live up to it's not you know if we're feeling these feelings of guilt and condemnation that it's wrong and often we look at the end product and not the journey they've gone on so we compare ourselves to the end product like isn't rick warren amazing instead of looking at the journey that he's been on i'm thinking actually that's okay because we've all got different journeys to take so i've got a little confession to make i am judgmental who else here is judgmental well done most people that's good uh so my brother recently spent a few hundred pounds quite a few hundred pounds of my parents money how dare he on my inheritance on um a sleep therapist so his son was going through just not sleeping um and he's was he was two years old and they just really needed some help so they sought professional help that's quite expensive and me in my um thinking i know it all kind of frame of mind after having joy who's now three years old and she was a great sleeper so i approached the subject of well joy slept i know how to make

this person sleep just give me a call i'll tell you all you need to know now i've got two children the second one doesn't sleep i think god's got a sense of humor but at that point in my life i was really judgmental like how dare you spend my parents money on something like this it's just like like come on it's easy i did it it's easy now i'm like oh a sleep therapist let's look that up the point um the point is i haven't walked in your shoes you haven't walked in mine and often we project our own path our own journey onto each other so i don't know what you've been through i don't know what financial hardship you've been through i have never uh lived hand to mouth i've never missed a meal unless it's my own choice that's like um if i had been through real poverty i might have a very different outlook on life and none of us have walked the same journey we've all got our individual stories to tell and so it's really hard to try to try not to be judgmental and actually just to just to allow allow god to speak to us in our own place it's good to seek wisdom from each other um but we need to be careful as well so jesus said jesus says that you are not condemned jesus said to the women in adultery in john 8 where are your accusers didn't even one of them accuse you no lord she said jesus said neither do i go and sin no more for in christ jesus there is no condemnation so right now no matter how you're feeling i want you to hear the message there is no condemnation no matter where you're at with money there is no condemnation so in praying for this talk um myself and donna had a had a little pray and donna's really good at getting images from god and she got this picture of a money spider and then the various things that come along with the the figure you know a picture of a spider and she felt that was from god so i'm here to share it so there's three aspects of spiders that we might have one is fear are you scared of them and relating to money are you scared are you scared of not having enough or maybe you have enough but you're scared that one day you won't or your children won't how much fear do you have now quite early on in my christian walk someone i went up for prayer ministry and someone was very bold and said i've had a word from god for you and it is you will always have enough you will never be rich or poor but you will have enough i was like oof okay and i actually throughout the years i've hung on to that when there's been difficult times when i've been scared there's not enough in the culture around me today it says i meant to be the breadwinner i meant to be earning lots of money for my family my wife's on maternity leave we're now trying to save some money it's quite tight and i feel like i should be out earning all the money it's the culture but i keep going back on this word from god that they will will always have enough and just to do what i think god is telling me to do i also um when i started doing youth work i just finished a degree in astrophysics i might have told this story before but i had this huge student debt i had um yeah some debt and i couldn't see a way of doing what god wants what i thought god wanted me to do which was youth work and getting

paid very little and still being financially stable and paying off this loan and so i asked god you know i will i will go into ministry if you pay off this loan for me because i was scared i was scared of like actually you know doing it without the financial backing and then i got a phone call from my uncle who we hardly ever hear from he lives in malaysia and he says david i just want to pay off the student debt that you got you had i'm like what you don't know what you've just done it was 15 grand just gone and so then i enrolled in a in bristol baptist college and started doing a youth work degree and i didn't get more debt from that it was good um but that was just an incredible moment where actually my uncle said oh i was going to tell you at the start of the degree that all your student debt was going to be paid for but your parents asked me not to and it just so happened at that point i prayed to god and then it had been answered and so i haven't looked back since the second part of being a spider of not being a spider of a spider is um perhaps feeling overwhelmed if there's too many of them is it you know if there's a bunch of spiders like you know when there's nests they're all hatching out maybe you have too much money which is an interesting thing so you often um maybe you don't have enough maybe you've got too much so this reminds me of a song by c6 steve does anyone know c6 steve is he's an american yes he's an american singer he's i think he's in his 60s he's got a big gray beard he's really lived a life and he does this kind of country style singing but it is very good well he's got this one song called treasures i just want to read out the lyrics to you i would quite like to sing it but i'm not sure when i walk down that's okay when i walk down your street through your barred windows you look at me and you wonder have i come to ask for one of your precious things that do not last all your treasures all your treasures you think you know me but you don't know that there's more to this picture than that shows and you fear that i come to steal your security that ain't real all your treasures all your treasures i will leave now and you won't cry with relief you'll just sigh you'll remember come one day and you'll walk out your door because you can't stay while all your treasures all your treasures slip away so he wrote that um after reflecting on his youth he used to go just walking aimlessly walking and walking and he used to go through these american suburbs and he never looked that well to do and people would look out their windows at him and go what does he want and he didn't want anything he's just walking he didn't want any of their stuff but they'd always look out with that look of what do you want and look through the windows and then sigh with relief when he's gone but he says in an interview and about this song is that they all look like they're imprisoned by their stuff he was there walking down the street free and they're all in their houses peeking out going what does he want and sighing with relief and they shut the door and he's out there going you you all look trapped what's going on why are you all trapped in your possessions all your houses all your treasures that will slip away that was his perspective on things it's a very powerful song if you get the chance to listen to it c6 steve treasures it's a good plug for him so we can be trapped by money

the more we have maybe the more security you want to have more cameras we might put up more insurance we get the third part is exchange so there are myths about spiders do you i wonder if you know some of these i was surprised by a few so there's superstitions surrounding spiders if you step on a spider you'll bring on rain did you know that it's gonna rain if you said all spiders except tarantulas are omens of good luck the larger the spider the bigger the rewards if you see a spider climbing the wall you will have your dearest wish come true seeing a spider run across the wall is another sign of good luck i mean if you see a spider spinning a web you'll have an increase in your income due to it's hard work like do people know this stuff if a spider crawls into your pocket you'll always have money like get in there if a spider hangs over your head you'll get a letter that day and if a spider builds its web across your door you can expect company and if you walk into a spider web you'll meet a friend that day and one of the more interesting ones is um don't kill spiders because it has been unlucky since a spider spun a web over baby jesus to hide him from herod seriously i haven't read that in the bible did that happen there are superstitions that exist um so there's also superstitions around around around money and it's like it's the exchange of money that superstitions around surround so consumerism if you buy the next model up of car of whatever it is you'll be happier one of the ones i've been i have encountered time to time in myself is the exchange superstition with church and tithing so if i give my tithe to christ church it will meet my need and if it does not meet my need it i will reduce my tithe that is a superstition that's a consumerist myth being put onto your tithe that's not biblical and i've i've i've had that so it's annoyed me you've sung the wrong hymn you've got the wrong guy up to speak i'm not giving my tithe this week it's that exchange that that superstition that is in our culture of this consumerism that money rules but we've already received we give because we received first we we give out of what jesus has done for us not what we're yet to get but in all these examples the fear feeling overwhelmed the exchange money has been given too much power god wants us to give that power over to him our god is a jealous god he's a loving god he loves you so much and he warns us that you can't serve both god and money because money will give you orders it will boss you around if we don't put god first and god wants freedom not condemnation he wants money that comes from generosity not from guilt so if it's like oh if i have to give 10% oh because everyone says i has to you know is it

[20:19] if you're feeling guilty it's your heart's in the wrong place it needs to come from a joyous generosity of what god and jesus has already done for us so we had that reading jesus saying do not worry and that has annoyed me from time to time because it's so hard not to worry the world is full of anxiety on the news all the time the unemployment level brexit just like everything so i encounter young people um so i work at the ymca twice a week and this summer i was um given a job at the skate park at locking in western supermare and my job was just to get to know the young people there and hang out there um and through the ymca as well recently i've been allowed to take some young people for meals that wouldn't otherwise have you know had the opportunity to and during my time with these young people i've been asking them are you hopeful you know what are your aspirations for the future and many of them just aren't hopeful of what's to come they read the news they oh we're all going to die in a nuclear war between america and north korea anyway world war three is not far away or they look at house prices and think we're never going to afford a house they look at jobs and think it's very competitive i don't know if i could do that and they're crushed by this anxiety and the schools and everyone trying to get the best out of them the results and the anxiety level between young people is going up and up and up and it's coming out in self-harm in eating disorders in you know mental health and it's really hard to see to see that happening so this world is filled with anxiety and yet jesus says do not worry so we need to be able to show these young people that you can get through life without worrying i wonder if we could do that i mean i think that's one of the gifts as you get older and wiser you've encountered things in your life hardship moments where you're not sure if you've been made redundant what's going to happen but you're sitting here you've got through it somehow these are things that we need to pass on this good news that actually you don't have to worry so much now i wonder is your picture of jesus a happy person or is it someone who's very doom and gloom because a lot of people like to think that the message that the church gives is this world is a place of shadows it's a place of sin of war you know it's it's just not a hopeful place but is your picture of jesus out of a happy person because yes there is darkness and all the darkness and sadness in the world landed on him at the crucifixion yes he wept at lazarus's tomb when he died and raised him from life yes he became sad when angry when people did not trust god and there's the agony of the garden of gethsemane but these are the exceptions they're the dark patches on a bright background jesus is watching the birds in this passage and he's going look at them look how they're enjoying life swooping together just having a great time they're not worried then he looks at the flowers in the fertile galilean soil says look at the colors and the patterns look at these flowers look what god has done and yet they could be cut or trampled

really easily but just look at the beauty in this world we have a creator god that has made an amazing world for us i wonder who here watches planet earth because that really brings it out doesn't it where you see things that just amaze you i can't believe that the world does this jesus isn't filled with anxiety about tomorrow but he's able to be fully present in today so he's able to wear i i never thought about this before but when he when he was crucified the roman soldiers cast lots over his tunic that's because it was an amazingly beautiful tunic it wasn't just a piece of sackcloth that it would have torn and thrown away because it had blood on it and stuff they cast lots over it they wanted it because he was able to wear a tunic there's that story of the perfume being poured over him and he he's able to appreciate it and be fully present in the moment he's able to put money in its place when jesus tells us not to worry about what to eat drink or wear he is not saying that it doesn't matter it isn't about eating less or drinking less or wearing the worst clothes jesus liked to party and when he done and he was able to wear things like this tunic so we are to work we are to earn a living but we should do it with joy because our father the creator god of all wants to clothe us and feed us there's a saying like put the world first and you'll find it gets moth eaten in your hands but put god first and you'll get the whole world thrown in and you'll find it